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ABSTRACT

The Sweet Street Academy is a school within a school. Most of its 26 students are below grade level in reading and mathematics and have histories of behavioral difficulties or adjustment problems. The objectives of the program are to build meaningful personal relationships with each student and to develop student reading and mathematics achievement. Extensive data is presented on findings related to the student population, academic achievement of the students, attendance rates, staff evaluations, interviews with the staff, student evaluations, parent evaluations, and evaluations of the program by members of the staff of the parent school. The evidence seems to indicate that the program is successfully achieving the goals of building a meaningful personal relationship with students and improving reading and math achievement. The major problems within the program seem to stem from the lack of opportunity for full planning and for preparation for the admission of students. Recommendations are offered to help improve the program. (Author/IRT)

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FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

MADISON PARK ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM
SWEET STREET ACADEMY

Submitted to

The Office of Curriculum Planning and Evaluation
Grand Rapids Public Schools
Grand Rapids, Michigan

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PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

The Sweet Street Academy is a school within a school, located within the Madison Park Elementary School. Two adjoining rooms at the end of one wing serve as the program's principal quarters. In addition, students utilize general facilities of the school such as the gym, cafeteria, playgrounds and art room. Sweet Street Academy consists of three (3) teachers, including the Director. Currently the program has twenty-six (26) students enrolled, although the initial projections were forty. Upon entering the program, most of the students are below grade level in reading and mathematics. Because of a highly transient student population, enrollment is considerably lower than projected although the program has maintained as many as thirty-five (35) students at various points in the school year. In addition, many students have presented regular classroom teachers with problems because of their particular learning styles. Although students do have histories of behavioral difficulties or adjustment problems, none of the students currently enrolled have been severely emotionally impaired.

Because of the particular histories of the students involved, the major emphasis of the program is upon three (3) primary objectives. One such objective of the staff is to build meaningful personal relationships with each student. It is believed that these students have a particular need to develop their self-esteem and to build trust in adults and respect for teachers as individuals and as figures of authority. Affective growth is therefore seen as an important consequence of the program. Another goal emphasized by the staff is the development of reading skills. Since the students in the program are below grade level, a majority of the formal instructional program is aimed at improving their reading level. A final objective of the program is to increase math achievement.

The staff uses mathematics as a tool for developing abstract conceptualizations and thought processes. Other skill areas are developed through participation in a variety of in-class and out-of-class activities and programs.

Students enter the Sweet Street Academy as a result of case conferences involving the sending teacher, parents, and Sweet Street staff, along with other appropriate educational personnel. Referrals are primarily made from five elementary schools comprised of high numbers of Title I and/or Chapter 3 students; however, entrance is essentially open to any student aged 8 through 12 who could potentially benefit from the program. Students may leave the program at their request, at the request of parents, or as a result of a review of a student's progress.

The atmosphere in the classrooms is generally quite relaxed and animated, with specific reading and math instruction being conducted in the mornings and individualized activities and instruction in the afternoons. Wednesday afternoon students are dismissed so that the staff may participate in planning activities. A recent innovation is that Friday afternoons are set aside for selected arts and crafts activities such as knitting and building bird houses. During the morning sessions, students are divided into either skill or interest groups for instruction. Students gather in groups for such sessions but instruction is individualized within each group. Because of the small number of students in the program, each student is known on a personal basis and therefore, each student's needs and progress are very well known to the staff. In addition, the Grand Rapids Public Schools Objective Referenced Tests in Reading and Math are administered when students enter the program, and at the end of the school year to ascertain student progress in these basic skill areas. A self-esteem

inventory is also administered to some students as a diagnostic tool. No other tests are regularly administered.

Because Sweet Street Academy is a new program that was implemented only two weeks before the beginning of the current school year, some problems were encountered. Since there was no planning time prior to the beginning of the program, needed instructional and project materials have not been immediately available. Some instructional materials were on hand at Madison Park but much remains "on order." In addition many supplies for special projects (such as wood) are in short supply and this hampers development of optimal instructional activities.

Students do utilize the learning center at the school once a week. Other materials available and used include:

Harcourt Reading Series, Levels 4-6

New Age Illustrated Reading Series

King Comics Reading Series

Holt Mathematics, Levels 1-6

Sullivan Reading Series, Books 1-24

Magazines and Newspapers

Fiction and Nonfiction Books

Math-O-Meter

Classroom Science Kits

Pride-Black Studies

Reader of Young Black Americans

Learning about Human Relations - Teaching Pictures

Ebony Success Library

Dictionaries

Encyclopedias

Harcourt Concepts in Science, Level III

Harcourt Science Lab and Texts, Level V

Thinking Ahead in Science, Solar System Kit

Probe

Hayes Math Grade 2, Book 1 and Grade 1, Book 2

Clue

Zaner Handwriting Series

SRA Reading Workbooks

Holt School Mathematics

The staff attempts to motivate and reward students through positive reinforcement, the majority of which is verbal and affectional. However, on some occasions, "points" are given to students and a "store" is available once a week for the students to "spend" accumulated points. Children are awarded points for going to their groups, lining up, and for other valued behaviors. Points have not been used as a reward for the acquisition of academic skills. Candy was originally the favorite item in the store, but the staff has diversified the "inventory" so that candy is no longer available and such items as mittens, model airplanes, deodorant, and perfume are offered. In addition, films are frequently available for viewing in exchange for points. Also a system of "stars" has been adopted in which students may receive stars if they feel their behavior during the morning or afternnon was appropriate and merits such reward. The staff monitors these student reports, but to this point, students have been very honest during the two daily public sessions where stars are awarded. The objective for the

utilization of these stars is to afford the individual students and the class the opportunity to reflect on socially desirable and undesirable behavior. Hopefully, this method of value clarification will help the student to develop social behavior that will enable him/her to perform successfully in school and other social settings. Various rewards are planned for children with different numbers of stars. For example, a camping trip was conducted in the Spring.

One aspect of this program that makes it somewhat unusual is the degree to which the staff is involved in the students' personal lives. This is typified by the fact that the staff often make calls on students' families and by the frequency which evaluators found the students and teachers together outside of the classroom setting. For example, some of the staff have had children into their homes as rewards for various behavior and as a mechanism whereby affective growth can be achieved. Attendance at various sporting events with the staff is also offered as reward to certain students. These examples serve to demonstrate the extent of commitment that the staff members exhibit to students in the program.

EVALUATION OBJECTIVES AND PROCEDURES

EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

The unique nature of Sweet Street requires that specific evaluation objectives be pursued. The following component of this report describes the objectives of this evaluation and procedures for conducting this study.

Evaluation Objective I: Social and Academic Attainments

Determine whether students are progressing academically at improved rates with better attendance, fewer behavioral problems, and greater acquisition of academic skills.

Evaluation Objective II: Program Strengths and Suggestions

Ascertain staff, student, and parent feelings and attitudes about the strengths of the program along with suggestions for strengthening the program.

Evaluation Objective III: Program Observation and Description

Observe the referral and intake process, the instructional and counseling procedures, and the termination mechanisms in order to understand and describe and report the dynamics of the program.

Our orientation toward this evaluation is twofold. This project should provide information to educational planners and administrators which is immediately useful for making administrative and program decisions.

Secondly, but of equal importance, this evaluation should serve the needs of the program being examined. Out of this evaluation plan should come a set of assessments and recommendations which can be used to strengthen the project.

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

The information contained in the report was gathered and reported to insure that each evaluation objective is achieved. Procedures which have been utilized to obtain each objective are specified below.

Objective I: Social and Academic Attainments

Procedures:

Utilizing whatever units for academic progress the project uses, produce a frequency distribution of student progress.

From school records, prepare roster with school attendance figures for Fall 1974.

Collect data from student records.

Prepare a table of mean differences of attendance rates.

Prepare and administer counselor and teacher rating scales and survey as to behavioral improvement of students (an adaptation of the Detroit Development Profile).

Provide statistics of scores on available standard tests for reading and math and for rating scale data.

Objective II: Program Strengths and Suggestions

Procedures:

Develop staff, parent, and student questionnaires and interview schedules.

Interview all staff in Fall 1974.

Prepare summaries of staff interviews.

Distribute and collect student and parent questionnaires.

Distribute and collect student and parent questionnaires for comparison groups.

Prepare frequency tables of parent and student responses.

Distribute and collect staff questionnaires.

Prepare frequency tables of staff responses.

Conduct follow-up interviews of staff in Spring 1975.

Prepare summaries of follow-up interviews.

Objective III: Program Observation and Description

Twelve on-site visits were made by evaluation specialists of Information Services Incorporated.

Pertinent documents and materials were examined to determine referral, intake, process, and termination procedures.

FINDINGS

STUDENT POPULATION

This description of the student population was constructed from a review of the available student cumulative records. A total of twenty (20) data sets, including cumulative folders, classroom records, and staff observations were examined and the following information was obtained. It can be seen by the different numbers of students reported that some of the data sets were incomplete:

AGE

Age	*Number*	*Percent*
12	*6*	*30*
11	*4*	*20*
10	*7*	*35*
9	*3*	*15*
	20	

SEX

Sex	*Number*	*Percent*
Female	*4*	*20*
Male	*16*	*80*
	20	

PREDOMINANT ETHNIC BACKGROUND

	Number	*Percent*
Black	*26*	*100*
Other	*0*	*0*
	26	

A survey of student cumulative records showed parent employment information was available for twenty (20) students. These records indicate that students at Sweet Street tend to come from families whose parents are blue collar or semi-skilled factory workers. Many parents are unemployed. These data are shown below.

PARENTS' OCCUPATION

	Number	*Percent*
White Collar	*0*	*0*
Blue Collar	*6*	*30*
Unemployed	*14*	*70*
	20	

DAYS ABSENT 1973-74

N = 20

Range: Low = 1, High = 72

Average = 22

TIMES TARDY 1973-74

N = 20

Range: Low = 1, High = 54

Average = 19

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

In order to determine the degree of improvement in academic skills during the school year, the following testing procedures and reporting strategies were employed. The only formal or standardized testing done in the program was the administration of the Grand Rapids Public School ORTS in reading and math. These objective-referenced tests were given to each child entering Sweet Street and to all students enrolled in May, 1975. Only those students who have been

enrolled and have attended the program for the full year are reported here. It is suggested that if a student was not enrolled for the major portion of the school year, test information may not be truly reflective of the effects of the program and, as such, would not be relevant for purposes of evaluating progress in academic achievement.

Reading Improvement

The table below reports the pre- and post-test scores of the ORTS for reading. Because different level tests were administered, comparison figures are difficult to construct. For purposes of this report it is assumed that if a student achieves 100% of the items for any particular grade level he/she is at that grade level. If the student is correct on a proportion of items for a particular grade level, he/she is not at grade level. For example, if a student achieves 60% of the items in a pre-test for level three (3), then that student is considered to be .60 of the way through grade level three. If, in the post-test for level four (4), the same student answers 75% of the items correctly, he/she has progressed more than one full year. To be specific that student has progressed one full year plus .15 of another year (.75 - .60). Therefore, an improvement of 1.15 grade levels would be reported for such a student.

See Table 1 on Page 12

Table 1

1974-75 Pre-Post Achievement Data
(ORTS) Percentage of Reading Skills Attained

Grade	Student ID	Fall, 1974 Test Level	Fall, 1974 % Right	Spring, 1975 Test Level	Spring, 1975 % Right	Grade Levels of Improvement
4	001	3	85	4	67	+ .8
	002	1	85	2	100	+ 1.15
	003	1	90	2	100	+ 1.1
	004	2	75	3	95	+ 1.2
	005	3	90	4	83	+ .9
	006	5	95	6	100	+ 1.05
	Average					+ 1.03
5	001	3	90	4	88	+ .98
	002	2	65	3	95	+ 1.3
	003	3	80	4	83	+ 1.03
	004	2	95	3	80	+ .95
	005	2	90	3	85	+ .95
	006	2	75	3	100	+ 1.25
	007	2	100	3	85	+ .85
	008	3	80	4	96	+ 1.16
	009	1	90	2	80	+ .9
	Average					+ 1.04
6	001	2	90	3	80	+ .9
	002	3	85	4	67	+ .82
	003	2	75	3	100	+ 1.25
	004	3	80	4	84	+ 1.04
	Average					+ 1.00

There are two aspects to the above data that are very obvious. The first is that many of the students entered Sweet Street far below grade level. For example, two of the sixth graders could not master all of the items in the second level test. The second is that there has been much improvement in all of the childrens' reading scores. This improvement ranged from a high of 1.25 levels to .8 of a level. Considering these childrens' history, the consistency of this type of progress in every child is to be appreciated.

Math Improvement

Data in Table 2 reflect pre- and post-test results for the math ORTS.

Table 2

1974-75 Pre-Post Achievement Data
(ORTS) Percentage of Math Skills Attained

Grade	Student ID	Fall, 1974 Test Level	Fall, 1974 % Right	Spring, 1975 Test Level	Spring, 1975 % Right	Improvement
4	001	3	90	4	80	+ .9
	002	1	90	2	100	+ 1.1
	003	2	60	3	100	+ 1.4
	004	2	90	3	100	+ 1.1
	005	3	75	4	85	+ 1.1
	006	4	90	Hospitalized		
	Average					+ 1.12
5	001	3	85	4	85	+ 1.0
	002	3	60	4	90	+ 1.3
	003	3	85	4	80	+ .95
	004	2	80	3	85	+ 1.05
	005	2	80	3	85	+ 1.05
	006	3	95	4	100	+ 1.05
	007	2	90	3	100	+ 1.1
	008	2	80	3	100	+ 1.2
	009	1	95	2	100	+ 1.05
	Average					+ 1.08
6	001	3	75	4	90	+ 1.15
	002	2	90	3	100	+ 1.1
	003	2	60	3	65	+ 1.05
	004	3	80	4	90	+ 1.1
	Average					+ 1.1

The growth in mathematics displayed by this data is even more impressive than that for reading. Again, every child gained from 1.4 to .9 grade levels over the school year. The data indicate significant academic growth for students involved in the program.

COMPARISON OF ATTENDANCE RATES

A roster of students who first enrolled in the Sweet Street program during September and October 1974 was compiled and student records of attendance were examined. Of the twenty (20) students enrolled, data were available for all but four (4) of them. Table 3 shows the number of days absent for the 1973-74 school year at the sending school and the number of days absent for the first semester of this year (1974-75) in the Sweet Street program. Monthly absentee rates are calculated to allow appropriate comparisons.

Table 3

Absenteeism Rate Comparisons

Code #	Total Days Absent 1973-74	Monthly Rate	Days Absent Fall Semester 1974-75	Monthly Rate	Difference in Monthly Rate
01	11	1.1	3.5	.7	- .4
02	11	1.1	.5	.1	- 1.0
03	32	3.2	4.0	.8	- 2.4
04	72	7.2	5.5	1.1	- 6.1
05	22	2.2	0	0	- 2.2
06	49	4.9	7.5	1.5	- 3.4
07	1	.1	5.5	1.1	+ 1.0
08	5	.5	8.5	1.7	+ 1.2
09	25	2.5	2.5	.5	- 2.0
10	46	4.6	1.0	.2	- 4.4
11	39	3.9	4.0	1.0	- 2.9
12	25	2.5	13.5	3.4	+ .9
13	10	1.0	1	.2	- .8
14	26	2.6	3.5	.8	- 1.6
15	20	2.0	7.0	1.7	- .3
16	5	.5	1.0	.2	- .3

Thirteen (13) of the sixteen (16) students had lower absenteeism rates than previously, while three (3) had higher rates of absenteeism. The average reduction

in absenteeism was 2.1 days per month. Projected over the total year, the number of days decrease in absenteeism is 273 days (2.1 days/month x 10 months x 13 students = 273 days). Using these projections, a net decrease of 243 days of absenteeism results for these sixteen (16) students.

EVALUATIONS OF THE TEACHING STAFF

As a part of the overall study of the effects of Sweet Street, the views of teachers were sought in two areas. The first area concerns teachers' perceptions of changes in their students' confidence in themselves to do school work, work habits in school, social adjustment in school, and ability to control their tempers. The second area concerns the teachers' perceptions of the general strengths and weaknesses of the school program and any recommendations for improving the program.

Teachers' Perceptions of Changes in Their Students

The data reported in the following table indicate that the teaching staff generally believes that the students at Sweet Street have improved over the school year in self-confidence, work habits, social behavior, and control of temperament. Although progress is perceived in all areas, the area of social behavior is seen as the least improved in students. This is perhaps understandable when considering the nature of the student population being served. When considered in conjunction with the growth in academic areas, the total impact of Sweet Street is more accurately assessed.

Table 4

Teachers' Perceptions of Changes
in Attention Needed by Their Students in Relation to
Their Self-Confidence, Work Habits, Social Behavior and Temperament

Levels of Teacher Attention Needs	Student Characteristics: Self-Confidence Structure 9/74	Self-Confidence Structure 4/75	Work Habits 9/74	Work Habits 4/75	Social Behavior 9/74	Social Behavior 4/75	Temperament 9/74	Temperament 4/75
Needs very little special assistance. Relatively independent. Could function in any program.	11.9%	50.8%	10.7%	42.8%	11.9%	32.2%	16.9%	44.1%
Needs special programming and assistance. Student would have some difficulties in a traditional classroom without special assistance.	40.7%	49.2%	35.7%	48.2%	33.9%	55.9%	42.4%	42.4%
Borderline development. Needs extensive help and individual attention. Very doubtful that student could function in typical school setting.	47.4%	0	53.6%	8.9%	54.2%	11.9%	40.7%	13.5%

INTERVIEWS WITH PROFESSIONAL STAFF

In this section of the report the views of the professional staff of Sweet Street are summarized. It should be noted that this summarization is not a report of only those staff perceptions which are judged by the evaluators to be "correct." Regardless of the orientation of a particular staff person, his/her perspective can have considerable consequences for the conduct and success of Sweet Street. It is important to our evaluation to be as clear as possible about the consequences and variations in viewpoints regarding the major strengths and weaknesses of the program, as well as recommendations for improvement.

In December 1974 each staff member participated in an interview ranging from thirty (30) minutes to two (2) hours in length. An open-ended approach was utilized so that staff members were free to express concerns in those areas which were most important to them. Because of the fact that there are only three members on the staff, it will be difficult to describe views without easy recognition of their source. Therefore, a collection of quotes will be provided and then a narrative will attempt to summarize the major concerns and views of the staff.

"The lack of planning time has been a major problem."

"There is some shortage of materials."

"We need more room."

"Socializing these children is more important than skills."

"Forming a personal relationship is paramount."

"We must develop self-esteem and self-concept of these kids."

"It is difficult to plan for these kids; one day they'll be great and really up and the next day it will be a disaster."

"These kids really want to go to school--and that's great!"

The majority of staff views centered around two primary themes. The first concerned the lack of planning time and preparation that they had before the program was implemented. The second theme concerned the importance of affective growth over academic growth for this particular group of children. In addition, problems of materials acquisition, curriculum development, and other practical matters were expressed. Clearly these were seen as temporary and of less significance if the program continued. There was consensus that the major thrust of the program should continue to be personal/social growth. Although the development of reading skills is seen as essential, the development of meaningful personal relationships and social interaction skills is clearly seen as the most critical need of these children.

In May 1975 the staff was asked to identify the major strengths and weaknesses of the program and to make suggestions for improvement. Again, because of the small number of staff involved, direct quotes will be used to express the views of respondents.

Strengths of Program

"Student/teacher ratio." (all staff)

"Teacher respect and caring for students."

"Teacher involvement in classroom and after-school activities." (all staff)

"Flexibility among staff."

"Freedom and funds to take field trips." (all staff)

"Staff make home calls to improve attendance."

"Teacher commitment to importance of social aspects of student development."

Major Weaknesses of Program

"No planning time prior to beginning of school year." (all staff)

"Difficulty of operating within a traditional school setting." (all staff)

"Lack of time to acquire and insufficient materials." (all staff)

"Lack of sufficient staff." (all staff)

"Sweet Street was totally dependant on services already existing at Madison Park (psychological services, social worker) and this was not sufficient." (all staff)

Recommendations for Improvements

"Staff should have at least two or three weeks planning time prior to the opening of school in the Fall." (all staff)

"We should have a full-time aide." (all staff)

"Staff should include at least a half-time parent worker." (all staff)

"Sufficient professional services should be made available to accommodate this program." (all staff)

"We should have a new site such as in the annex." (all staff)

Summary

It appears that the staff is extremely dedicated to teaching the kind of student enrolled in Sweet Street. The extent of involvement with the students on a personal level is seen as the most significant aspect of the program. The staff generally feels that there is a lack of support for the program. In particular, they see a need for more direct professional service and more funds for supplies. It is also felt that more help could be given to the children if para-professionals such as aides and parent workers could become a part of the staff. Major suggestions for improvement center around the need for increased planning and staffing. Finally, staff members believe there is a problem in having this program in a building with a regular elementary school program, and suggest that it should be more isolated from the regular school.

STUDENT EVALUATIONS

In the early part of April 1975, student questionnaires were distributed to the students of Sweet Street. The staff assisted the students in completing the survey as well as distributing and collecting the questionnaires. The table which follows presents the responses to these questions. In addition, there are selected quotes abstracted from the open-ended portions of the questionnaire.

A total of twenty-three (23) instruments were returned. Analysis of student responses follows the presentation of data.

Table 5

Student Questionnaire Data

Question:	Responses Yes	No	Undecided
1. *"Do you feel you have progressed at this school?"*	91%	4%	4%
2. *"Are you happier at school this year?"*	91%	9%	0%
5. *"Are you able to read better this year than last?"*	100%	0%	0%
6. *"Are you better in math this year than last?"*	96%	0%	4%
7. *"Would you like to attend this school next year?"*	70%	26%	4%
8. *"Is there any subject that you would like more help in or would like to study more?"*	96%	4%	0%

Additionally, several questions afforded students opportunities to express their opinions in an open manner.

Further comments concerning student academic progress include:

"I think I have learned a lot more."

"The teachers understand how we feel about the work we have learned."

"I have grown up."

"I'm able to learn more."

"Didn't do nothing at my other school--just flopped around . . . doing better in reading and black history . . . come to school every day."

"I'm getting along with kids and teachers better."

"Feel happy about teachers this year."

"I think that I work good."

"I have grown more."

"I have improved my work."

When asked what they liked about the school, the following items were given:

Characteristic Liked	Number of Times Mentioned
1. Field trips	11
2. Star system	5
3. Reading	4
4. People (teachers, students)	3
5. Gym	3
6. Lunch	2
7. Instruction	2

Aspects which students reportedly didn't like about the program include:

Characteristic Disliked	Number of Times Mentioned
1. Too much fighting	5
2. Math	4
3. Teachers	2
4. Something about lunch	2
5. School work	1
6. Principal	1

Of those students who stated that they desired more assistance in a subject or additional study in a particular area, the following subjects were listed:

Subject	Number of Times Mentioned
Reading	9
Math	8
Science	3
Art	2
Nature	2
Music, Physical Education, Shop	1 each

Conclusions:

The students overwhelmingly expressed satisfaction with their progress at Sweet Street. They also stated that they are happier this year and more improved in reading and math, and a large proportion (70 percent) would like to attend the program next year. The activity most frequently cited as a positive aspect of the program was the variety of field trips, while the degree of student fighting seems to be the most disliked aspect.

PARENT EVALUATIONS

During April 1975 thirteen (13) parents of Sweet Street students were contacted by telephone. There were a total of twenty (20) students who had been enrolled since the Fall of 1974. Each parent was interviewed with an open-ended questionnaire. The items related to: 1) parental perceptions of their child's academic progress; 2) general satisfaction of their children in school; 3) behavioral changes noted in their children; 4) suggestions for modifying the program; and 5) plans regarding further enrollment of their children in Sweet Street.

Table 6

Parent Questionnaire Data

Question:	Responses Yes	No	Undecided
1. "Do you feel that your child (or children) progressed at the school?"	62%	8%	30%
2. "Does your child appear to be happier at school this year?"	85%	0%	15%
3. "Are there some things about the school you would like changed?"	31%	69%	0%
4. "Are you planning to enroll your children for the Fall semester?"	92%	8%	0%

Illustrative comments regarding the question on student academic progress include:

"He has more ambition."

"He likes school a lot more."

"He reads a lot better."

"She is learning quite well." (four parents had similar comments)

"He's more cooperative."

"Much more self-confident."

"Behavior is better is school."

Suggestions for primary modifications of the program include:

"Should have more discipline."

"Needs more rooms and teachers."

"I'd like them to learn more."

"Would like to be informed if child is staying late at school."

Additional parent comments:

"Would like them to teach sewing."

"I like the teachers."

"The teachers are dedicated and sincere."

"The hyperactive kids and slow learners should be separated."

"It's a wonderful program and I hope it continues."

"I'm concerned about the degree of physical force used."

"The program is really good."

"I don't want my child bussed."

"I like the way the kids have more freedom."

The responses generally show that parents are quite content with the program at Sweet Street. Sixty-two percent (62%) feel their child progressed; eighty-five percent (85%) feel their children are happier; and ninety-two percent (92%) plan to send their child to Sweet Street next year. There is no consensus among the four parents who would like to see some changes made. Parent support and satisfaction is also obvious in the open-ended comments received concerning student progress, and in the statements elicited in "additional comments."

In general, parents see their children learning more, becoming more positive toward school, and improving their self-concepts.

EVALUATION OF SWEET STREET BY OTHER STAFF AT MADISON PARK

Because of the fact that Sweet Street is housed in a regular elementary school building, it was felt that an important perspective to be examined would be that of the regular school staff at Madison Park. In order to obtain this perspective, an open-ended questionnaire was distributed to the staff. Of the twenty-one (21) questionnaires distributed, seven (7) were returned. These responses were analyzed to determine whether or not the staff was housed in the same part of the building as the Sweet Street program.

Each respondent was asked to summarize his/her views concerning the particular strengths of Sweet Street as well as the major weaknesses of the program. They were also asked for their recommendations for improving the program. The following summarizes the views expressed by the regular staff of Madison Park about Sweet Street.

As the table below indicates, the greatest consensus concerning the strengths of the program had to do with the nature of the individualized instruction and the atmosphere and environment of the classrooms of the program.

Table 7

Major Strengths of the Program

Strengths	Number Reporting	
	Same Area as Sweet Street	Other Part of School
Individual attention and counseling	3	2
Environment and atmosphere of classroom	2	1
Pupil/teacher ratio	2	1
Providing relief for regular teachers	2	0
Weekend and afternoon activities	2	1
Quality of the staff of program	1	1
Availability of outside consultants	1	0
Developing better self-image through repeated successes	1	1
Men and women teachers working together	1	0
Providing an opportunity to learn in a different way	1	0

On the other hand, the staff of Madison Park did see some negative aspects to the program. As can be seen in the table below, the major aspects cited as weaknesses concerned the degree of "separateness" of the program from the regular school staff and other activities.

Table 8

Major Weaknesses of the Program

Weaknesses	Number Reporting	
	Same Area as Sweet Street	Other Part of School
Students break too many school rules	3	0
Program is too unstructured	2	1
Should tell rest of school staff about program	2	1
Program too removed from rest of school	1	1
Attitude that the program deserves special attention	1	0
Should teach more how to function in regular school	1	0
When program staff is asked to follow-up, it doesn't	1	0
Image that program is for "bad kids"	1	0
Too much extra money leads to jealousy	1	0

When asked to specify their recommendations for improvement of the program, respondents demonstrated little consensus. The only item which was mentioned more than twice was the idea that the program's students should follow the same school rules as the other children when they are not in the actual rooms used by the program.

(see Table 9 on following page)

Table 9

Recommendations for Improving the Program

Recommendations	Number Reporting	
	Same Area as Sweet Street	Other Part of School
Students should follow school rules	3	1
Should be more information given to other staff	1	1
Should seek other staff assistance and cooperation	1	1
Program staff should do same things as other staff	1	0
Should develop better selection criteria for students	1	0
Staff should be more experienced and better trained	1	0
Program should be in a separate building	1	0
Should be more structure to the program	1	0
Students should be taught more responsibility	0	1
Program should be expanded	0	1
Curriculum should be enlarged	0	1
Should be better goal specification in the program	0	1

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

The Director of Sweet Street Academy was given the opportunity to construct a statement concerning his perceptions of the goals and achievements of Sweet Street during this past year. A complete copy of this statement can be found in the appendices. An abstract of that statement, prepared by ISI, is presented below.

Abstract:

The objectives cited by the Director include the establishment of admissions procedures and the development of academic and affective areas of students admitted. Emphasis is placed on mathematics, reading, and the development of self-esteem. The Director perceives that these goals have been reached in almost all cases.

The successful accomplishments of the program are seen as the result of cooperation from personnel in sending schools and the many activities carried on by a dedicated staff.

The Director recommends that increased space be allocated for the program if it is to be expanded. Next year the "magic circle curriculum" will be utilized to obtain student growth. In addition, attempts are planned to increase community and parent involvement in the program. Increased secretarial support is seen by the Director as necessary as well as added staff in other areas.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

Student Composition

Students ranging in age from nine to twelve compose the student body where eighty percent (80%) are male and all are minority students. Many students are below grade level when entering the program. Students generally have a history of absenteeism, and the majority have not functioned at their potential in regular school settings.

Academic Achievement

Achievement test results on the Grand Rapids Public Schools objective referenced test series (ORTS) reveal significant gains in both reading and mathematics. Reading improvements ranged from 1.25 levels of gain to .8 levels of gain. Math improvements ranged from 1.4 levels of gain to .9 levels of gain.

Reduction of Absenteeism

Eighty-one percent (81%) of the students in the program had lower absenteeism rates at Sweet Street than in their previous schools. The average rate of reduction of absenteeism for these students is 2.1 days per month.

Evaluations of the Teachers

The teachers, using rating scales to assess needs of students for particular types of attention, indicated that the students as a group had improved over the school year in self-confidence, work habits in school, social behavior, and temperament. The area requiring the most attention at this point is the development of better social behaviors.

Interviews with Professional Staff

The evaluation staff of Information Services Incorporated is impressed with the dedication and enthusiasm of the staff to aid the development of the kind of student served by the program. The degree of extra time spent with the students is one indicator of this dedication. The staff is concerned with structuring a more effective program and expanding the program so as to better obtain the objectives of the program.

Student Evaluations

Students overwhelmingly expressed satisfaction with their program at Sweet Street. They stated that they are happier this year and more improved in reading and math, and a large proportion would like to attend the program next year. The activity most often mentioned is the frequent field trips, while the degree of student fighting seems to be the most disliked aspect.

Parent Evaluations

Parents are quite content with Sweet Street. The vast majority felt their children had progressed, were happier, and planned to send their children to the program next year. There is no agreement between the four parents who indicated that they would like to see some changes made.

Evaluation of Sweet Street by Other Staff at Madison Park

The staff of Madison Park seems quite favorably disposed toward the idea of a program such as Sweet Street. They see it as an effort to help students who could not fully benefit from regular school programs. The reservations they hold for this particular program concern the extent to which the program is "separate" from the majority of the Madison Park activities, policies, and practices. They feel that students should comply with standard school rules and practices while in areas other than their classroom facilities, and that staff should become more involved in total building staff functions.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The evidence seems to provide clear indication that the program is successfully achieving some of its goals--particularly in building a meaningful personal relationship with students and improving reading and math achievement. Since these students have not achieved to their potential in regular school programs, this accomplishment is significant. The major problems within the program seem to stem from the lack of opportunity for full planning and preparation for the admission of students.

The following recommendations are proposed as an aid for improvement of the program at Sweet Street. These recommendations stem from the data presented here as well as from observations of the ISI staff regarding the personnel and program of Sweet Street.

1. During this first year the staff has relied heavily on its intuition and educational expertise for guiding this program. This may have been necessary, even desirable, for the first year and with only three staff members. However, if the program increases its size or changes personnel, greater elaboration and specification of program will be necessary. The Director has indicated that the curriculum may be modified somewhat during the next year. This may be a desirable first step in a more thorough development of program objectives, activities, and procedures. It is recommended that a document describing the program be prepared by the Director. This document should include descriptions of program structure and activities, staff roles, and strategies for modifying the program to accommodate additional students given the realities of space and staff limitations.

2. It would be desirable to institute a program of standardized testing to supplement the ORTS. If this information were available, more complete determinations could be made concerning academic growth. Consultation with the Office of Curriculum Planning and Evaluation should be conducted concerning this matter.

3. The three staff members in the program this year performed more or less interchangeable roles, with the exception of the administrative tasks performed by the Director. We suggest that some thought be given to a form of division of responsibilities. This division could serve as an organizing principle for the more efficient and effective use of staff talents and capacities.

4. It appears that there was a certain amount of concern because of the Sweet Street program being housed in a regular elementary school building. This concern was voiced by Sweet Street staff and teachers of Madison Park alike. We suggest that the staff meet with the Principal of the building to develop a plan for alleviating problem situations.
It would seem that two possible solutions exist to solve these problems. The first would be to physically separate, to a greater extent than currently, Sweet Street from Madison Park. The alternative would be to modify some program practices. If the latter approach is chosen, we would suggest that a greater effort be made to inform and gain the cooperation of the staff of Madison Park. In addition, more attention should be focused on how program students behave when not in program quarters. Finally, we suggest that the program staff more fully participate as staff members of Madison Park than is currently the practice.

5. The staff has expressed its desire, and we would support it, for increased training in dealing with disruptive children. The Director may wish to incorporate such activities as a part of any in-service training programs which might be developed in cooperation with his staff, and discuss such plans with the Director of In-Service Training.
6. The planned movement toward using the "magic circle curricula" is commendable. However, we suggest that more systematic consideration be given to other possible alternative ways to structure this program. This will become increasingly necessary as the program grows and as staff roles need more clarification. Careful consideration of all available educational models should proceed in conjunction with the Office of Curriculum Planning and Evaluation.
7. One of the cogent observations made by the program staff is the fact that many students have not received the same type of ancillary professional services in Sweet Street as they formerly did in their regular school setting. We believe that one of the priorities for the next school year should be the more careful coordination of the program with other school services such as psychological counseling, social services, physical education, and music.

Final Report
The Sweet Street Academy

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

The Director of Sweet Street was given the opportunity to construct a statement concerning his perceptions concerning the goals and achievements of the program during this past year. The following represents the Director's response to this opportunity:

"A. Review of Objectives

The basic objectives for our program at the beginning of the year were:

1) To identify and screen into the program students from five Title 1 schools who were not achieving success in their present educational programming. Criteria used were reading and math scores, absenteeism and described social behavior.

2) To build meaningful personal relationships between the staff and the students. Some of the students have a particular need to develop self esteem and trust toward adults. Student learning and how one feels towards his or her teacher appears to be directly related.

3) To raise the reading and math skill levels of each student one full year above their instructional level based on the Grand Rapids minimal objectives.

B. Objectives Achieved or Close to Achievement

1) Objective one above has been achieved. However, we did not reach the number of students enrolled in the program as we stated in the original proposal. This was due to a lack of room space at Madison Park and to the amount of students with disruptive behaviors. We strived to work in small groups. We enrolled students from four additional schools not mentioned above.

2) Objective two was achieved in that all of our students with the exception of one indicated that they enjoyed school and have learned this year. Our attendance in comparison with the students previous year greatly improved. One student was absent in excess of 60 days last year; this year, she has been absent under 10. Some students call us at school if they are going to be absent or tardy and the reason for such action. There have been many personal interactions between the staff and students that have fostered student learning (both cognitive and affective) that are too numerous to mention here.

3) Objective three has been achieved in every instance except in the case of three students. One student only achieved 65% of his

reading objectives this year. The two others, as of this writing, have not completed their test because of previously bad experiences with test taking. All other students mastered at least 80% of the objectives contained in the next highest test above their instructional level determined when they entered the program.

C. Efforts to Achieve Objectives

1) Objective one was achieved by using the following procedure for screening and placement. It must be noted that this procedure has been modified from the original procedure.

From the five target schools, a committee from each school was formed which included school personnel chosen by the principal with the advice of the director. This included teachers, parent workers, aides, nurses, school social workers, reading and math consultants, principals, psychologists and the director of Sweet Street. From this screening meeting, a list of students was prepared. A home call to the parent was made by the director and a person from the school who knew the parent to explain the program and why their child was selected for placement. In most instances, the parents and the student visited the program. The director then conferred with the parent and student to see if they would like to be in the program.

A formal screening and placement meeting was then scheduled according to the policies and procedures of the Grand Rapids Public Schools. Only one parent of those contacted about placement declined to have their child placed. The newly enrolled students were then transferred from their present school to Sweet Street as soon as transportation was available.

2) Objective two was achieved in many ways. We tried to break down any alientations that the students may have built up in their school experiences with teachers. We strived to be humanistic child centered people with authority. We related our personal experiences with theirs on various subjects. We took trips during the after school hours (mainly at our expense). We made every effort to explain the how and why of school or of certain desired behaviors. We tried to draw from the strengths and interests of the students and not from their weaknesses. Planning around their interests, as a group and individually, was successful.

Small group meetings called morning groups were scheduled every morning for 30 minutes where specific affective learning skills were practiced. Dr. Polomaris and his magic circle curriculums were an influence on the structure of these meetings. Students practiced listening and speaking skills, shared experiences and built trust during the year utilizing these meetings. Students who had few friends at their referral school now have been able

to acquire them.

Other ways that students have changed their learning habits are individual. I will mention some of them. Most of the students would not, at the beginning of the year, be successful in completing written tests. At the end of the year, all but two were. Some students were in the habit of wandering around the room, under tables, and in the halls at the first of the year. This has been eliminated along with the excessive absenteeism and tardiness. Another young man has had a history of being on medication to curb his behavior. This year he is successful on his own. Some students, two in particular, have realized some of the behavior that has kept them in trouble in previous years. They have worked on eliminating them as methods for problem solving.

3) Objective three was met in a large part by meeting objective two. The instructional level of the students ranged from level EE1 through level EE2. The students were tested by the Grand Rapids minimal objective tests and grouped as to the skills that they did not know. This resulted in three groupings which were individualized as much as possible for reading and math. Not all of the same students were in the same reading and math groups. Children moved from lower level groups to higher skill level groups during the year. The groups contained all grade levels. The groups were taught by objectives, therefore, many different materials were utilized.

One student did not achieve at least 80% of the objectives at the end of the year. Another EE1 student scored 100% on the EE3 tests.

D. Recommendations for 1975-76

1) The physical plant was limiting this year. We need more space, idealistically an annex to an elementary school would be desirable. If we remain at the present facility, at least one more classroom is needed to increase the enrollment. I feel that we have not had many of the problems associated with being a school within a school that I had anticipated at the first of the year. The main factor concerning this has been the full cooperation of the principal. Many staff personnel have also been very helpful and understanding.

2) The structure of the curriculum will be modified for next year. The staff and I have decided that we will base our affective educational skill development on the magic circle curriculum. We are planning to attend a three day institute to develop the necessary skills, especially in the area of conflict management. We will also group children for reading and math according to instructional level and to the way individual children learn. The latter method will be finalized this summer.

We are also exploring the idea of having one teacher (home room type) assigned to a certain number of students for affective skill development, art, social studies, science and clerical duties. Then we would group by objective to individualize the math and reading programs.

3) Community and school relations have been good. We have received assistance and utilized the resources of Calvin College, Western Michigan University, Grand Valley State Colleges, Ottawa Hills High School, Meijer Thrifty Acres, Y.M.C.A., St. Mary's Hospital, Sheldon Complex, and many individuals. We hope to offer more assistance to regular elementary programming next year. I consulted with individual teachers at three elementary schools this year at the request of the principal. The consultations involved methods to assist the teacher with disruptive classroom behavior.

4) Parent support has been very effective this year. Parents have assisted us on field trips, money raising projects, and school sponsored activities. They have also supported us in classroom management. Two parents related to us that this has been the first year that they have felt positive toward their child's school.

We have had 100% parent-teacher conference participation for the year. For some parents, this was their first visit to school in many years.

We need to increase our knowledge about the functions of community agencies who could be working with the students and their families. Too many times this year a crisis might have been avoided if we knew of an agency working with a student. We also need to make ourselves better known to the agencies.

We have received referrals from Project Rehab on elementary children who have had drug experiences and from Protective Services for placement. Next year, I would like to explore possible placement for children described above that are not in school.

We have been limited this year in staffing to do the type of parent work that I feel is needed to make a successful school experience for our students. A program for more effective parent involvement and consultation is needed. I would like to organize a parent group that could meet at school to make educational games, socialize, and discuss common problems.

5) Some administrative needs have been difficult to meet this year. I feel I need more time during school hours to complete administrative tasks and program development. I feel that, as director, I should also teach part of the day to stay as close to the students and staff as possible and to be able to assist the teachers more effectively in meeting the needs of the students.

Clerical work has been a strain at times at Madison Park because of the extra responsibility put on the school secretary. If the program is moved to another location next year, a co-op student or some other source will be needed. If the program remains at Madison Park, better scheduling or more co-op assistance could help. I also need space for an office that will provide a degree of privacy and a secure area for the storage of records and other items. An office would also provide an area for private consultations with staff and students.

6) The budget for this year has been adequate for the size of the program. If the program is to be expanded to serve 45 students, more staff and materials will be needed. Motivational funds would not have to be increased with the addition of more students as we did not use the total amount allocated for this year.

   If the program is moved, more money might be needed for materials since we utilized many programs already housed at Madison Park. An accurate budget will be formulated after I find out if we will move the program to another location.

7) Staffing will need to be increased next year if we are to increase our student enrollment. I would like to include 45 students next year in the program. Another teacher would be needed along with another aide. A teacher specially trained in special education or emotionally disturbed would be desirable. I feel that I, as director, need to again select all future staff as I did for this year.

   I would like to use the additional teacher aide to serve half-time as an instructional aide and half-time as a parent worker. We have used four college student aides this past year and anticipate utilizing them and student teachers for next year.

8) More school social worker and resource room services are recommended for next year. There were no additional services for our students because of our presence at Madison Park. This deprived some of our students the services that they had been receiving from their previous placements. We also did not receive music consultant services and limited physical education consultant services this year."